PURRINGTON, (W. A.)

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A Paper read before the American Social Science Association, at the Annual Meeting, held at Saratoga, Sept. 5, 1888.

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HOW FAR CAN LEGISLATION AID IN MAINTAINING A PROPER STANDARD OF MEDICAL EDUCATION?

BY W. A. PURRINGTON, OF NEW YORK CITY.

READ BEFORE THE AMERICAN SOCIAL SCIENCE ASSOCIATION, SEPT. 5, 1888.

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen: — I desire, first of all, to express my indebtedness to those gentlemen in the different States and Territories of this country and in the British Provinces to whose courteous replies to a circular letter of inquiry upon the general topic of Medical Legislation, sent to them in the early part of the summer, it is due that the conclusions of this paper may be said with fairness, I think, to represent not only the opinion of others besides myself, but prevailing opinions among those whose chief interest in medical legislation is that it shall confine the practice of medicine to educated persons, regardless of any particular views they may entertain as to questions of therapeutics.

It is not intended to present statistics here. My correspondence has not yielded any from which I should care to deduce conclusions, nor are they needed to substantiate what I hope may prove fair reasoning and sound deduction.

This paper must be, therefore, a statement of what I conceive to be general principles and fair inferences from an experience of some years, as counsel of the medical societies of the State and of the county of New York, in drafting and securing the enactment of the present by no means perfect medical statute of that State, and enforcing in the county of New York obedience to its provisions.

It may be said, however, as the general result of the inquiries, which were made in every State and Territory of this country, and also in the British Provinces, that almost every reply to the circulars expressed approval of some system of regulating by statute the practice of medicine; and the opinion was also strongly expressed that such legislation as has been already, crude and imperfect though it is, has perceptibly improved the standard of medical education.

At the threshold of this inquiry, it is worth while to lay down certain postulates.

First of all, let it be said distinctly that such legislation as we are about to consider is regarded by the courts both as constitutional and as highly desirable. It ought to be scarcely necessary to have to say this. But the opponents of statutory regulation of medical practice so constantly declare it to be an infringement of the liberties of the citizen, and therefore unconstitutional, that one may well preface any remarks of this nature with the assurance that, so far as any principle can be considered as settled and approved by judicial authority, the principle involved in this sort of legislation stands settled and approved by the Supreme Court of the United States, and that of every lesser commonwealth before which it has been brought.

In the second place, it is necessary to state the only principle upon which such legislation can be justified. That principle is *salus populi*,— the principle of security, of self-protection against fraud and ignorance. It is a vulgar and frequent assertion of the foolish persons who really believe in the *quasi*-supernatural powers of the ignorant and depraved and of the knaves who, professing to have such powers, prey upon the credulity of their suffering fellow-creatures that the only purpose of medical legislation is to increase the emoluments of a favored class by obstructing entrance into it with such barriers as will exclude many honest but ignorant voters from the right to practise physic, and so, by limiting the number of its practitioners to the educated, lessen competition. It is not necessary to demonstrate to you the falsity of this slander, or to argue in favor of the propriety and justice in principle of throwing safeguards about a profession intrusted more than any other with the health, honor, and life of the citizen. Surely the State has a right to protect the lives, health, and bodily welfare of its members against the assault of the charlatan quite as much as against the assault of a more courageous homicide. Nor is it altogether an answer to this argument to say that, inasmuch as a man voluntarily selects the charlatan as his medical attendant, while he exercises no choice as to the homicide, there is no analogy between the two cases. It is quite impossible for me to see in what regard, except cowardice, a man who, with absolutely no knowledge of the human economy or the effect upon it of drugs, attempts to practise medicine for fee or reward differs, when his practice proves fatal, from the less crafty murderer who

for reward, if not for fee, knocks his victim on the head. There is this difference also between the two offences,— the quack's is chronic, the homicide's sporadic. But, as between the courageous homicide and the venders of quack remedies composed with morphia and like poisons, the former seems admirable. It is said, indeed, that the patient having his choice of medical advisers will exercise it wisely; and, if he does not, the civil remedy for malpractice, accruing to himself or his representatives, is a sufficient remedy for one foolish enough to seek such advice. But civil remedies are expensive luxuries of doubtful result, and besides that the interest of the community does not centre in punishing an offence committed on one of its members, but in preventing its repetition against others. I am not aware that it is recognized as a defence to a charge of homicide occurring, say, in the prize-ring, that the deceased invited his antagonist to fight with him in an amiable contention for a purse, which should be the fee or reward of the victor; and, indeed, it seems to me that the prize-fighter, unlucky enough to kill his opponent, deserves more sympathy than the charlatan; for his antagonist had a chance to win the fee and perhaps do the killing himself, whereas between quack and patient the former stands to win the fee, while the latter will never compel his adviser to swallow his own prescription.

In considering what legislation can do in bettering any social condition, we must never forget that the best law which can be framed is but an exceedingly clumsy instrument for the enforcement of even the elementary moral obligations that are clear to all of us. Almost everybody of cultivation can see a reason for prohibiting — not for the sake of those directly interested, but as harmful to the community — prize-fights, duels, bull-fights, bridge-jumpings, and all other performances, including suicide, whereby foolish men not only risk their own lives, which might be no great loss to us, but set a pernicious and demoralizing example. The offence against society by such precedents is so palpable and gross that a very crude mind will assent to the justice of their punishment when committed and the forbidding of their occurrence. But the transgression of the charlatan is somewhat more subtle and a thousand-fold more dangerous; yet, because his services are sought by their victim in the belief that they are a prevention, not a source of danger, many consider his acts as matter of private interest, and overlook the public wrong. From the stand-point of morals alone, the quack, from whose ignorance, and worse than

ignorance, a patient's death results, stands in the same relation to one who has committed murder while engaged in robbery that the subtle wrecker of a great corporation does to the unlucky scamp who has stolen the wherewithal to get his daily bread or rum, as the case might be. The difficulty of tracing the effect to its cause is the safety of the former offender, and it is not unfair to say that the chief wrong-doing punishable by law is clumsiness in execution. To succeed in crime, one must be an artist.

It is when we come to seek a legal remedy against the immoralities of quackery that the difficulty of reaching them without making laws themselves objectionable becomes apparent. Bentham has very well pointed out that moral and statutory law have identical purposes and are governed by the same principles, differing only in this: that, although both are circumferences in the same plane, they are concentric and of unequal radii. Each circumference has the same centre,— namely, the greatest happiness of each and of all; but the circumference of morals bounds the entire plane of human action, whereas that of law, of which the radius may be said to be practicability of enforcement, has a much narrower scope. Whatever is legal is, or certainly should be, moral. But there are a thousand moralities the attempt to enforce which by law would lead to evils far greater than those sought to be obviated. In one sense, law itself may be almost called an evil, since it is not only a restriction of freedom in action, but a restriction which unfortunately can often be enforced only at the cost of inflicting lesser evils than it is designed to prevent: thus, for example, the existing medical statutes of most of our States recognize, as the sole license for the practice of medicine, the possession by the licentiate of a diploma from a chartered college conferring the degree of doctor of medicine. And, while it may be perfectly true that the probabilities are greatly in favor of a beneficial result from these laws in limiting the number of uneducated practitioners of physic, it is also quite as true that a factitious value is given by such legislation to a mere parchment, and a standard set which cannot be higher than that of the poorest college whose diploma is recognized as a license; and it is quite possible that in many cases persons of fair attainments acquired through extra collegiate study may be debarred, temporarily at all events, from a right possessed by a far more ignorant graduate of some contemptible school incorporated by a too complaisant legislature. These incidental hardships under existing

laws are more than offset by the increased security of society against ignorant pretenders; but they show how necessary it is to keep it in mind that a statute must be not only right in its purpose, but must neither work greater evil than it prevents nor be impracticable of enforcement.

Of course, no penal or restrictive law can be effectively enforced if its purpose does not commend itself to the moral sense of the community; and every enactment that cannot be vigorously enforced is an encumbrance to the statute book, useless lumber, like the purchases of Mrs. Toodles at auction-rooms of coffins and door-plates that might be handy some day,— nay, worse than useless, for, like lumber in a dark garret, such statutes are stumbling-blocks for the unwary.

The law is a schoolmaster over and above all things. Its chief value lies in the fact that its daily enforcement is a constant voice crying in the wilderness against the evils that it prohibits and punishes. Any one so unfortunate, or perhaps I should say fortunate, as to be called often to a police court must at times feel that the attempt by legislation to check even the gross and palpable crimes against person and property is a never-ending toil of Sisyphus. The stone seems to roll back every night as far as it is rolled up every morning. The same faces turn up, the same crimes are committed over and over by the same persons. We grow disheartened when we seek the good effect of a penal statute among the individuals who have felt its heavy hand,— and this is most sincerely to be regretted,— but we pluck up heart when we see the number of individuals who are deterred from crime and educated to an appreciation of the common rights by the law's enforcement.

The chief purpose of legislators in times past was the punishment and remedy of evil committed. The tendency of modern law is toward prevention. We are seeing more and more the wisdom of the clever Irishman who "hollered before he was hurt," because he could see little use in hallooing afterward.

What has been said up to this point may seem, perhaps, if not irrelevant to the topic, nevertheless such a statement of general principles as it is not necessary to make before an audience of students of social science. And, if the words uttered here found no audience beyond these walls, it might have been well to consider only the desirable features of a good medical act. But I owe the honor of being asked to address you to the fact that it has been my professional privilege for some years to advise those

medical societies that have been striving to protect both the public and the medical profession of the State of New York against pretenders. What is said here is carried to many beyond reach of our voices. What to you may be truisms are to many intelligent men theorems to be demonstrated. Medical legislation is never asked for, but a cloud of misunderstanding and misstatement at once arises, and the proposed measure is attacked as unsound in principle and unfair in practice.

It has therefore seemed proper both to clear away all such mistiness before answering in the most general terms the question at the head of this paper, and to make plain to every one who may hear or read these words the spirit in which the medical societies of New York are acting in this matter,— a spirit that must commend itself to men of fair minds and common sense.

Starting, then, with these general principles,— that under its police power the State has authority to regulate the practice of medicine, and that no law can be of real utility that cannot be enforced actively,— we may examine within what limits it is wise to exercise that authority, and how far its exercise can aid in maintaining a proper standard of medical education.

If no law can be effectively enforced that arouses strong antagonism in any considerable part of the community, it is manifest that a medical law enacted to favor any special class of practitioners of medicine or to uphold or suppress any theory of medical practice or to establish any set of regulations as to fees or otherwise obnoxious to any influential congeries of citizens would probably soon become a dead letter and positively harmful to the whole medical profession. In the *Medical Record* of Sept. 11, 1886, I endeavored, in an article entitled the "Evolution of the Apothecary," to illustrate this point by tracing the struggle of the College of Physicians to reserve to its licentiates their exclusive right under its charter to prescribe medicine. After some two hundred years of successful prosecutions of apothecaries and others, the college met its Waterloo in 1703, when Apothecary Rose, on his appeal to the House of Lords from the judgment of the courts in favor of the college, succeeded in having his appeal sustained, not on points of law, but because the system in vogue seemed to the Peers absurd, as necessitating the employment in trifling cases of two or three persons at large fees,— a physician to prescribe, an apothecary to dispense, and perhaps a surgeon to operate,— a state of things that a Peer would not submit to in the

case of his sick servant, and would not require a poor man to submit to in his own. The physicians had their fee system and their professional pride to thank for their defeat in this as in some other cases. This decision having made it possible for every ignoramus to tinker with the health of John Bull, the same apothecaries who had routed the physicians on the point of fees and acquired a right to prescribe as well as dispense their own drugs after a hundred years' experience of the results of their freedom, during which time general medical education had sunk to a dismal condition and quackery had flowered abundantly, procured from Parliament the amendment to their charter known as the Apothecaries Act, whereby their Hall was empowered to examine and license apothecaries. The enactment of this statute according to Sir Henry Halford, who had opposed its passage, "raised the standard of that branch of the profession amazingly."

In other words, the very men who procured the extension to themselves of the right to prescribe, because of the burdensome regulations of the physician, solicited a restriction of that right when they found that charlatanry and ignorance were rapidly getting control of general practice. In this page of history, we find evidence that a law prescribing, with a view to the general good, educational qualifications for practitioners of physic will obtain favor where statutes partaking of a trades-union spirit, using that word not in its better sense, will fail. I use the word "trades-union" here for lack of a better, and not as one necessarily conveying an objectionable idea. In the sense that a trades-union is a combination of artificers to improve their moral, physical, and mental condition by all lawful means consistent with a due regard to the rights of the community at large, it is a perfectly proper organization, and much to be commended as an element in the common welfare. In so far as such a combination, however, seeks to carry out a plan for procuring high wages by violently obstructing others in their rights to earn a livelihood in legitimate ways, it is an intolerable evil in society. What is true of the trades-union of artificers is equally true of organizations of capital similarly designed; but, both in handicrafts and trade,— the ostensible objects of which are avowedly selfish, being the pursuit of wealth or the earning of livelihood,— such combinations as these are more understandable, if not more defensible, than like combinations among men engaged in the quest of scientific truth. The avowed object of incorporating medical societies is stated in their charters, in New York at

least, to be "to contribute to the diffusion of true science and particularly the knowledge of the healing art." When they transgress these limits, and seek to establish burdensome fee systems or to forcibly check what they consider schismatic opinions, the law interferes to restrain them within their proper bounds. The courts have wisely, in most instances, declined to pronounce upon any questions of opinion or to interpret the word "physician" in acts regulating medical practice so as to favor the therapeutical systems of any body of practitioners. It is all one to the law whether the doctrine of *similia* or the doctrine of *contraria* prevail, whether the patient be dosed with the highest potency or the most heroic bolus; and this point was settled finally and wisely in the State of New York by the case of Corsi *vs.* Maretzek (4 E. D. Smith, 1), where the court refused to accept the contention that a homœopathist was not a physician in the legal sense of the term because he followed a system of healing disapproved of by the majority of practitioners of medicine No statute can be effective that is even suspected of the design to shackle or suppress opinion. Free thought is the breath, the life, of the scientific search for truth, as humility is its badge. When a man or a profession reaches the point where intolerance and self-satisfaction take the place of humility and fair inquiry, paresis of the soul has commenced. It is the law of our existence that

> "The old order changeth, yielding place to new;
> And God fulfils himself in many ways,
> Lest one good custom should corrupt the world."

I dwell upon this point because the reason that we do not have in New York to-day a State Board of Medical Examiners, such as we find in Illinois and European countries, and such as is requisite to any effective scheme for securing a fair average of education among medical licentiates, is due to the fact that it has proved impossible up to this time to bring into accord as to the organization of such a board regular physicians, homœopaths, and eclectics. About three-quarters of the entire number of medical practitioners in the State are regular physicians; that is, practitioners calling themselves by the name of no "school" or "sect." They number something like six thousand. The homœopaths and eclectics number about twenty-one hundred. Bills to create one or more central boards of medical examiners have been introduced into the legislature during the last four years at the instance of each of these parties. These bills have agreed substantially in all points

save two: first, the examination in therapeutics; and, second, the organization of the board. The physicians have insisted that their numerical ratio of three-fourths entitles them to a representation in the board of at least two-thirds. The two "schools" insist that, if this ratio should be given, their candidates would be plucked and their "schools" effaced, and that, when this was accomplished, the physicians would at once order new vials of enormous size, larger boluses and nastier drugs than ever before, that even the daughter of the horse-leech would be silent from satiety, and the cup and lancet would once more drench the land with gore.

In other words, we have this condition of things: Three parties exist whose interests are at stake in the proposed legislation. All declare that they favor restricting the practice to men who have studied chemistry, botany, physics, anatomy, physiology, diagnosis, microscopy, etc. The homœopaths and eclectics hold no sectarian views as to the atomic theory or the law of gravitation, and agree with those whom they dub allopaths as to which has the greater number of ribs a man or a woman. But, when we come to materia medica and therapeutics, we find a "state of things." Col. Jones, having a severe pain in the vicinity of his sword-belt, sends for his army surgeon, a regular physician; the baby has a sensation in its corresponding region, and Mrs. Jones calls in her homœopathic adviser,— for Jones indulges her in matters affecting her own baby; the nurse, experiencing a similar agitation, tries an eclectic; and the old "mammy" in the kitchen, feeling a like distress, sticks a pin in the carefully concealed rag baby she keeps for such occasions. All experience relief; and each, like the pedler who was kicked off four landings of a factory in quick succession, is lost in admiration of the beauty of the system.

Let us admit the truth that, while surgery has become almost an exact science as compared to its sister,— physic,— the latter is yet in the condition that unquestioning faith in the efficacy of medication and a willingness to break a lance for a system of therapeutics is to be found rather at the bottom than at the top of the profession. Therefore, whatever our beliefs or prejudices, we may as well make up our minds that no law will be tolerated that shall endeavor openly or covertly to favor or obstruct any system of medical practice as a system, regardless of the attainments of its professors. Whatever the facts may be, the law considers that the true physician is no blind partisan of any theory. He knows how feeble his best efforts are to combat disease, how few the medica-

ments that can be used with certain results. In proportion as he is learned and wise, he pins his faith neither to a doctrine of *similia* nor of *contraria*, realizing that differences of opinion arise not from knowledge, but from ignorance.

The stumbling-blocks in the way of every effort to achieve wise medical legislation are: first, the ignorance and greed of the believers in and practisers of *quasi*-supernatural methods of treating disease; second, jealousies among the more intelligent adherents to "isms"; third, jealousies between the mother church of medicine and those of her children that wish to make of their specialties separate professions; fourth, the obstruction from vested interests that consider themselves threatened,— the incorporated schools that have some capital invested, and regard their power to confer a diploma operating as a license to practise medicine as their chief stock in trade.

The condition of our statute books to-day is this: they contain (1) special acts incorporating medical, pharmaceutical, and dental schools, with here and there a general act for that purpose; (2) acts incorporating medical societies of physicians and of sectarian practitioners of motley nomenclature; (3) general acts regulating the practice of physic and surgery; (4) general acts regulating the practice of dentistry; (5) similar acts regulating the practice of pharmacy; (6) sanitary regulations and laws creating health boards.

This jumble is itself an evil and an efficient cause of the propagation of false ideas. A logical law, which will of itself be an educator, will recognize that the principle on which all these statutes are to be defended is that already indicated,— the right of the State to protect the health as well as the life and the property of the citizen. One health statute will then be enacted, and a responsible board created that will have in charge the arrangements of quarantine and sanitation and also the licensing of medical practitioners of every sort; and here I contend that the dentist and the pharmacist, thoroughly accomplished in their calling, are both medical men, and that, the sooner they are so recognized, the sooner existing jealousies as to them will die out, and the scientific character of the profession and its specialties will be raised. The student of medicine and pharmacy must go hand in hand for a while at the outset of their career. The former goes forward to the battle with disease. The latter remains behind to provide suitable ammunition. They are both fighting in the same cause, and will fight much better if each recognizes his fellowship with

the other. It is equally true that the dentist is a specialist in medicine. To deny to these men professional standing is to repeat the history of the past and to create discord and jealousy among those who are working in a common cause.

Legislation can aid in the education of all these fellow-workers chiefly by vesting the licensing power in a central Board of Medical Examiners, and, to some extent, under the diploma standard: (1) by fixing a minimum age under which they will not be allowed to practise their calling; (2) by requiring of each of them a fixed term of study of certainly not less than two graded years, leaving to the board, where created, the care of details; (3) by requiring proof by examination or certificate that each candidate for license had studied before beginning his professional course at least those branches of a general education in which law students are examined in this State before they commence their legal studies; (4) by declaring that no medical school — including in the terms schools of dentistry, pharmacy, and midwifery — shall be incorporated by special act, and providing a general law for the incorporation of such schools only upon proof made of the possession by the incorporators of sufficient capital — say not less than a hundred thousand dollars — and teaching plant to justify the belief that the school will be capable of exercising faithfully its franchises. Such an act should contain stringent provisions for its own enforcement and for the forfeiture of abused charters. How useless the mere enactment may be is shown by the fact that section six of chapter 114 of the New York Sessions Laws of 1853 contains a general provision of this nature. Nevertheless, since its passage, some six or more medical colleges have been incorporated by special act of the legislature; and had it not been for the vetoes of Governors Cleveland and Hill, when their attention was called to this general statute by the medical societies, at least one college would have regained by special act its charter of which the courts had deprived it. No greater service can be rendered to the cause of medical education by the State than the exercise of care in creating medical schools, and holding them to strict responsibility when created. The latter will never be done, I fear, except when the laws are invoked by medical societies. (5) A minimum course of medical study should be prescribed, in which a grade of at least seventy per cent. should be attained on examination. The regulation of all details of examination should be most wisely left to the board of examiners. But the topics in

which examinations should be had might well be specified in the statute; and I incline strongly to think that it would be most wise to omit any examination in those obscure topics of therapeutics and materia medica, upon which all medical heresies have been begotten by unscientific minds. One who should creditably pass his examinations in botany, chemistry, physics, anatomy, surgery, physiology, hygiene, diagnosis, obstetrics, and microscopics, especially if his clinical examination should show him to be educated in a true sense to observe and draw sound deductions from observation, rather than crammed like a parrot, might well be trusted to form his own conclusions and pursue his own studies as judgment should dictate in the *terra incognita* of therapeutics.

It has been already said, but it cannot be repeated too often, that the law has nothing to do with medical theories. The utmost it can do successfully is to prescribe that none shall practise medicine except persons educated in those branches of science that all admit are essential to an understanding of morbid conditions of our species, and possessed besides of a fair general education. It cannot prohibit the practice of sectarian medicine and such delusions as mind-cure and Christian science, for this would be an assumption by the law to prescribe what system of healing shall be followed; and it might as reasonably command — as, indeed, I believe it does in Mormondom — that all the sick should be treated by anointing with oil in conjunction with prayer by the elders.

If a man who has passed his examinations in such branches as above indicated shall conclude to adhere uniformly in practice to the doctrine of *similia* or of *contraria*, or even to the profundities of Mumbo Jumbo, or mind-cure, the law cannot prevent him. For his errors, he will be liable always in damages, no matter what system he adopts; and, with that, we must be content. If the education required of him does not keep him to the faith, we may perhaps find in some cases that his departure from it is the opening of a new way to fresh truth. (6) Finally, the law should not recognize any diploma as of itself conferring a right to practise medicine. Even if the possession of such a document should be required as an antecedent to examination by the health board, it should not be allowed to take the place of such examination. It is to the interest not only of the public, but of every medical college of high standard, that the diplomas of what have become known as "diploma mills" shall be deprived of the licensing power, which is their sole value.

Any scheme of medical legislation will hereafter, of course, em-

brace that great safeguard against imposture and efficient tracer of frauds, the system of registration, whereunder no one is allowed to practise medicine who has not made a public record under oath of his name, origin, and credentials for license.

Beyond the point here indicated, it would not be wise for legislation to go. The chief *desiderata* in a good law are brevity, simplicity, and lack of detail. If a diploma standard is to be maintained, it would certainly be desirable that the statute should provide that only diplomas of colleges giving graded instruction and requiring preliminary examination of their matriculants should be received as licenses.

But it may be well to say once more that the mere enactment of a law against a vicious practice will be no deterrent to the transgressor, and, therefore, of no service to the cause of education. He must realize that the law is enforced; and, in order that it be enforced, somebody must be charged with carrying out its provisions. In the State of New York, the regular medical societies have of late charged themselves with the duty of executing the medical act. Such acts have been upon the statute book for more than a hundred years. But prior to 1880 they had fallen into neglect, largely owing to the clumsiness with which they were drafted. In that year, the State Medical Society secured the passage of a new law, and in 1887 of a codification or revision of all the medical statutes; but the law in this State is yet far from perfect, and chiefly for the reason that there is no central body having control of its execution. The most that the medical societies can do is to punish those who practise without diplomas. They are powerless to exercise any supervision over those granting the license. In this regard, the statute of the State of Illinois is far more efficient than ours; and the Health Board of that State has entitled itself to the commendation of all who are informed of its excellent and efficient work.

But the County Society of New York has done enough to show that even a poor law can be of advantage to the cause of medical education. The example of its prosecutions has stirred up allied societies to action, and has constantly called public attention to the fact that the practice of quackery is not safe within their jurisdiction. Adopting the new code of ethics, it has shown conclusively to all who have watched its course that its members have not had in mind the suppression of any system of healing the sick only because they disapproved the methods of that system. It has recognized that the utmost limit to which the law can properly

go is to provide that nobody shall practise medicine at all, by which term the courts understand the use of drugs and instruments, unless he has the slender educational qualification prescribed by the statute. If possessed of that qualification, the society concede that the practitioner has a right to use whatever system may commend itself to his understanding or lack of understanding.

The prejudices and jealousies that prevented the passage of the Examiners Bills have been already alluded to. But, although those bills failed to become law, nevertheless, when the present statute incorporating their points of agreement was obtained by an alliance of all parties, a distinct advance was made, in that the homœopaths and eclectics were convinced that, whether the other societies agreed or not with them in matters of practice, they were willing to join hands with them in securing, if not the best legislation, at least the best possible under the circumstances; and that they were quite capable of bringing forward in good faith a bill actually what it appeared to be, and not secretly designed for the destruction of schismatics. And it is very safe to say that it is only a question now of agitation of public and professional opinion that is necessary in the State of New York to bring about such legislation as will obliterate all sects in medicine, not indeed by harassing the individual practitioner or legislating against any system of practice, but by educating the public mind to the fact that no one should be intrusted with the practice of any system who has not a fair attainment in those branches of study which all admit must be necessary to any one expecting to devote himself to the treatment of disease; and that every one is entitled to the name of physician who is learned in his science, skilled in his art, and capable in his profession of trying all things, holding fast what is true, facing bravely the errors of others, and admitting candidly his own, and, above all, recognizing the possibility of honest differences of opinion, which can be settled only by honest investigation and kindly exposition.

If the law will forbid the practice of medicine to all but those who give proof of a fair general education and reasonable attainments in the branches of sciences and medical study as to which there are no "schools," it will do all that can be asked. Its licentiates will be too intelligent to indulge, as a class, in vagaries, sectarian medicine will disappear or dwindle to insignificance, and the physician will be free to follow where the torch of Truth lights the way.